

conclusions somewhat similar to those reached by Dr. Kenealy, although approached from a slightly different standpoint. At puberty the girl evolves, says Dr. Kenealy, into "a more delicate, beautiful, and more highly organized creature," whilst the boy degenerates, "descending a rung lower in the ladder of evolutionary organization." Dr. Berry Hart states the change thus: "The boy remains thin, but more aggressive in his proceedings, is the delighted anxiety of his feminine relatives . . . he is then usually averse to formal instruction, which he terms 'rot,' and displays great contempt for his sisters and their school friends, who often easily surpass him in his tasks . . . when approaching manhood, however, he begins to draw up in the race, sees the responsibilities facing him, and easily overtakes and keeps ahead of his once formidable feminine opponents. . . . On the other hand, the girl at this age increases in weight and becomes plump and not so lanky as the boy, although the *Backfisch* or "flapper" is often with us as in Germany; she becomes more reticent and shy, eager at her school work, often toiling far beyond her strength . . . after seventeen the girl usually slackens her efforts after knowledge, and devotes more of her time to adornment or even to coquetry; at any rate, the boy's superior physical strength and more robust nervous system give him a staying power she does not possess." As to mental powers, Barry Hart quotes Waldeyer, and states that the general conclusion at present is that in the sexes the brain capability of women more nearly approaches that of men than the lord of creation fondly imagines. But there are functional differences: "women are more eager and intuitive than men; they come to conclusions more rapidly and weigh the result of their thoughts less. *Fiat justitia* seems to them so strong that the *ruat coelum* is not considered enough. Men would endeavour to avoid the latter by a compromise, but for women that is anathema; they would push on logically, and then adjure men to clear away the celestial debris and free them." Dr. Hart goes on to consider two things—woman's staying power, and how far her mental capabilities are modified by her sex; and he makes this significant statement: "Woman can certainly do what man does in ordinary life, but how far she can go on doing so without damage to her nervous system or her sex characteristics is quite another matter; certainly she will suffer more than a robust male and more even than the neurotic man." It is admitted that she can outclass man as a nurse and makes a better patient; but "it is really in motherhood that Nature is justified; here the woman is all grace and power—is worshipable." Here, finally, is Berry Hart's summing up: "Man and woman are equipotential, but not equivalent. The differentiation of sex has handicapped woman more than man; yet, for all that, she has the greatest influence on man, and at one stage of his primitive career turned the development of the race heavenwards, and formed the most sacred thing in the world—home and hearth. Nature has made woman's life one of special sacrifice, and has so tightened the bonds for this purpose that the attempt to break them and lead what some feminine leaders ingenuously believe to be the higher life of a man, can only end in that most dreadful of catastrophes—Nature's revenge."—I am, etc.

Edinburgh, Oct. 17th.

J. W. BALLANTYNE.

SIR,—I have been deeply interested in the article on the above-mentioned subject published in the JOURNAL of October 15th. Though neither "medical" nor "scientific," but only an ordinary person, I have made my own observations and thought my own humble thoughts on the most marked decline in good looks and good figures amongst women for many years. It has often presented itself to my mind as a very simple possible explanation of the (supposed?) decreasing marriage-rate instead of the deeply learned causes suggested.

When in public places, as restaurants, waiting rooms, etc., I look around me and think—were I a man, neither honour nor riches would induce me to spend my life with one of the vague-featured, plain-faced, flat-figured, large-footed, anaemic women one sees in dozens and hundreds. When I do see a good-looking girl, I cannot help staring almost rudely at her, in pure pleasure.

As causes of these decreasing "good looks," I often think lack of good air and ill-regulated exertion are largely

responsible. Women in offices—both private and public—owing to want of proper ventilation, breathe for many hours daily a vitiated atmosphere composed largely of human breaths, emanations from human bodies and clothes, and often most horrible ones from gas stoves and gas burners.

The one or two half-days "off" in the week are most frequently spent in violent exercise, as hockey or excessive cycling. For these exertions the sedentary, airless lives led during the other days of the week befit them ill. Their muscles are not in order for violent exercise, neither are their habits of breathing.

Some three years ago the female librarians in a free library in one of our largest and most important towns complained bitterly to me of the injury done to their health by the intense heat—it was really comparable to a "forcing house" for tropical plants—and lack of ventilation in the building. Their ailments were chest complaints and anaemia. One of them was a really naturally beautiful girl, but her complexion was a yellow-white.

This town has a sanitary committee and medical officer of health, and the library has windows in dozens—unopened! (Heating apparatus is usually left to an uneducated man, who allows it to be unbearably hot or nearly cold, as it happens.)

Some twenty odd years ago girls of the class I am speaking of were not "shorthand typists," clerks, librarians, etc., nor did they take such violent physical exercise as playing hockey, and cycling with men, which means keeping up in pace and play with men.

"Looks" depend very largely on health; and I have noticed that the skin of women living in badly ventilated places gets a "pitted" appearance, and hangs loose, to say nothing of tired eyes and "strained" expressions. Over-tire and that terrible thing "weariness"—a combination of bodily and mental tire—one sees only too often on otherwise young faces.

The ancient Greeks were noted for personal beauty; but Pericles says (Funeral Oration):

We have also found out many ways to give our minds recreation from labour, by public institution of games all the days of the year, by the daily delight whereof we expel sadness.

"Daily delight" is not being sedentary for five or six days, and violently active for one or two. Of course these words were written for men, but as the modern idea is the "man-woman," one may apply them to this latter-day creation.

Fortunately, if the modern novel is the expression of "the times," the "leisured classes" have no need to continue the acquirement of social accomplishments at the expense of money and brains. In a novel I have lately read, the heroine is described as going bathing with a party of young men in her father's pink pyjamas, and her "long white feet and straight toes" captivated the heart and hand (we will leave out head) of a youth with riches and a title. This is certainly a contrast to the "swooning" lady of older novelists, who, though she must have been an extremely irritating person, did, I verily believe, secure more masculine attention than the present type, though her "muscles" do "ripple beneath the tight-fitting sleeve."

It may be that "sentiment" has more effect upon the physical conditions of the body than is known, and that the constant throwing together of the sexes at school, and after, and the supposed "equality," and modern withdrawing of all "fences of custom and convention," have so largely done away with "sentimental" feelings of one sex towards the other, that, as a result of "mind over matter," certain functions of the body cease to be excited, and marriage and parentage become undesired.

Or, it may be the other effect—that the licence permitted in conversation, manners, and morals, with nearly all barriers of what was once considered "propriety," removed—emotions are unrestrained, and a prematurely worn-out mind, body, and nerves result, and no desire for the moral relation of marriage, with its ties and parental cares.

I earnestly believe the "man-woman" to be a disastrous creation, destructive of true and healthy and beautiful womanhood.—I am, etc.,

October 18th.

A PLAIN WOMAN.